

S-176  
Ruark-Ritzel Mill  
Westover  
Private

1876 with later additions

The center three-story core of the Ruark-Ritzel Mill was erected by William Mathew Ruark in 1876, and it survives as the only mill of its kind in Somerset County. In addition to its significance as the last of the steam-powered flour mills, all the late 19th-century machinery and equipment remain intact. Standing at the south end of Westover, it is an important visual and symbolic anchor to this railroad-oriented village.

William Mahew Ruark purchased in November of 1875 a 131-acre tract of land from S. Anne Brinton, "... on the south side of County road leading from Potato Neck to Westover and on the west side of the Eastern Shore Railroad ...". During the following year William Ruark erected the center core of this rambling flour mill and powered it by steam. Accompanying the mill was a vast agricultural complex which totaled close to 1400 acres by 1877, making him one of the most prominent men in the Fairmount/Westover area. According to family history, as well as the county atlas, William Ruark settled in Somerset County around 1852, having moved south from Hooper's Island, Dorchester County. In the later years the mill was operated by the Ritzels who presently own the property.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## State Historic Sites Inventory Form

### 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Ruark Mill - Ritzel Mill

and/or common Ritzel Mill

### 2. Location

street & number SW corner of MD 413 and MD 361 ☐ not for publication

city, town Westover ☐ vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland county Somerset

### 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: None

### 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Lucille Ritzel - Mrs. James A.

street & number telephone no.: 651-0880

city, town Westover state and zip code Maryland 21871

### 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Somerset County Clerk of Court liber 280

street & number Somerset County Courthouse folio 516

city, town Princess Anne state Maryland 21853

### 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

pository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

Survey No. S-176

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved    date of move _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Ruark-Ritzel Mill stands on the southwest corner of the intersection of MD 413 and MD 361 in Westover, Somerset County, Maryland. The large three-story mill faces north with gable on an east/west axis. Attached to the main three-story center block are numerous gabled and shed additions, primarily extending to the south and east. A long shed-roofed frame corn crib stands independent of the mill to the west.

The center three-bay section of the mill is a mortise and tenon frame structure reported to have been erected in 1876. A brick and concrete foundation supports the original mill, and narrow weatherboards uniformly sheath each side. A medium sloped tin roof with extended eaves covers the building and is distinguished by a gabled "pully house." The fenestration is basically symmetrical with double doors on the first and second floors flanked by 6/6 sash windows. A timber hoisting beam is located between the second floor door and third floor window.

The west gable end of the main mill is entirely covered by a three-story c. 1900 addition once used primarily for grain storage. This section stands on concrete foundations but is very similar in general appearance to the main mill. An uneven fenestration of loading bays and six over six sash characterize the north wall.

The west end is a solid wall of weatherboards, aside from a single 6/6 sash which lights the attic.

Attached to the rear facade of the addition is a two-story gabled section, while the main mill is largely covered by a variety of shed additions, one of which houses the steam engine. An iron stovepipe protrudes through the shed roof.

Extending from the east end is an expansive shed-roofed storage room which includes a separate room for the mill office. This section was added in the early 20th century.

The mill framing is completely exposed in each section. The center block is of mortise and tenon frame construction with large chamfered support posts. All the flour mill equipment along with the wooden shoots and belt systems remain in place. The west end addition contains tremendous bins used for grain storage, that rise three stories.

The east end shed is one large storage room with a small space partitioned off to serve as an office. The interior and exterior of the office is sheathed with narrow beaded boards.

Standing to the west of the mill is an independent shed-roofed corn crib sheathed with vertical boards.

Several sections of 19th-century mill stones are found on the east end of the shed addition. These serve as steps to a side door.

## 8. Significance

Survey No. S-176

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1876

Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D  
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☐ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The core of the Ruark-Ritzel Mill was erected in 1876 and survives as the only mill of its kind in Somerset County. In addition to its significance as the last of the steam-powered flour mills, all the machinery and equipment remain intact. The mill stands at the south end of Westover and is an important visual and symbolic anchor to the railroad- oriented village.

### History

William Mahew Ruark purchased in November of 1875 a 131-acre tract of land from S. Anne Brinton, "on the south side of County road leading from Potato Neck to Westover and on the west side of the Eastern Shore Railroad..." During the following year William Ruark erected the center core of this rambling flour mill and powered it by steam. Accompanying the mill was a vast agricultural complex which totaled close to 1400 acres by 1877, making him one of the most prominent men in the Fairmount/Westover area. According to the atlas, William Ruark settled in Somerset County around 1852, having moved from Hooper's Island in Dorchester County. In later years the mill was run by the Ritzels, who presently own the property.

Survey No. S-176

**Acreage of nominated property** \_\_\_\_\_

**Quadrangle name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Quadrangle scale** \_\_\_\_\_

**UTM References** do NOT complete UTM references

A	Zone	Easting	Northing
C			
E			
G			

B	Zone	Easting	Northing
D			
F			
H			

### Verbal boundary description and justification

**List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries**

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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name/title	Paul Touart - Architectural Historian
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<b>organization</b>	Somerset County Historical Trust	<b>date</b>
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street & number 424 N. Somerset Avenue telephone 651-1094 (Home)

city or town	Princess Anne	state	Maryland	21853
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The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

CHAIN OF TITLE

William R. Ruark and Sons 1877  
Ruark Mill - Ritzel Mill  
S-176

I.T.P. 280/516

James A. Ritzel - Marian B. Ritzel

to

5/16/1974

Lucille R. Ritzel

All these lots of land in Westover

O.T.B. 34/53

William M. Ruark  
Annie Ruark

to

9/12/1902

William M. Ruark  
Lafayette Ruark - trading as William M. Ruark  
and son of Somerset County - all that piece  
or parcel of land whereon the flour mill now  
stands together with the mill barn and all  
improvements

to William Ruark -

from Anna S. Brinton BFL 2/450  
from Levin H. Beauchamp BFL 6/238  
from Henry Ballard HFL 1/613  
from Oliver T. Beauchamp HFL 5/551  
from Charles Fountaine HFL 5/656  
from Charles S. Baker HFL 9/528  
from Clarene Honson HFL 10/272

-BFL 2/450 1/3/1880 - mentions Ruark Flour Mill

-BFL 6/238 - 6/12/1883 - mentions William M.  
Ruark's Steam Flour Mill - acreage shall be  
used, kept, maintained and disposed of as a  
place of Divine Worship for the use of the  
ministry and membership of the Methodist  
Episcopal Church

5860 III NE  
(MONIE)

38°07'30" 75°45'







Ruark-Ritzel Mill S-176  
Westover, Somerset County, Md  
Documentary photograph, c. 1900  
Copied 7/87, Neg. Md Hist. Trust  
Courtesy of Louise Ritzel



Ruark - Ritzel Mill  
Westover, Somerset County  
South Elevation  
2/84 Paul Touart  
Neg./Md. Historical Trust

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Ruark - Ritzel Mill  
Westover, Somerset County  
South Elevation  
2/84 Paul Touart  
Neg./Md. Historical Trust



Ruark - Ritzel Mill  
Westover, Somerset County  
Northwest Elevation  
2/84 Paul Touart  
Neg./Md. Historical Trust

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Ruark - Ritzel Mill  
Westover, Somerset County  
North Elevation  
2/84 Paul Touart  
Neg./Md. Historical Trust

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Ruark - Ritzel Mill  
Westover, Somerset County  
Mill Stones  
2/84 Paul Touart  
Neg./Md. Historical Trust

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